



As Director of the National Museum of Asian Art at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., I am delighted to extend hearty congratulations to the Omotesenke Domonkai Eastern Region USA on the fifteenth anniversary of their establishment.

As the National Museum of Asian Art just celebrated 100 years since its founding, we look to the future with renewed energy, driven by a vision to serve as a national and global resource for understanding Asian arts, cultures, and societies, and their intersection with America.

Our work in the field of Japanese art and culture is central to this vision. We are home to the largest curatorial and conservation program focusing on Japan in the United States, with five dedicated curators and conservators stewarding a collection of that spans over four millennia and includes paintings, calligraphy, prints and printed books, sculpture, ceramics, lacquer works, photographs, and the largest collection of Hokusai paintings and drawings in the world. Japanese art was central to the founding of the museum in 1923, and ethical collecting and acquisition work continues today, with more than 3,000 new Japanese works joining the museum's collection in the last five years. We are proud to display these works in our galleries.

Of course, our collection includes the tea leaf storage jar, named Chigusa, an important sixteenth-century meibutsu, which was exhibited in 2014 with the enthusiastic support of Omotesenke Fushin'an, which we are grateful for. With your cooperation, we produced a video, Dressing Chigusa, which shows the dynamic and enduring tradition of chanoyu that brings objects to life. A decade later, with Chigusa's first display in the Japan galleries at the NMAA, both our in-gallery and virtual visitors can learn from this video about how the living practice of chanoyu is essential to understanding Japanese art.

Chanoyu offers remarkable insight into Japanese history, politics, commerce, religion, philosophy, and aesthetics. Our museum is committed to showcasing Chigusa and other tea utensils that demonstrate the importance of chanoyu in shaping Japanese art and culture. We have hosted public tea events at our museum in partnership with institutions such as yours and will continue to do so. Our experts have presented and written publications on Chigusa, chanoyu, and the impact of both on Japanese art and culture.

A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step. And this has been a big one in our journey with your organization, with many more to travel together. Again, congratulations on this important milestone.

Director of NMAA
Chase Robinson